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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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SPIRITUAL HUNGER.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."—Matt. V. 6.

Hunger and thirst indicate the want of the body, the support of life from day to day, in the building up of every part of the system. In the creation of man, it was not safe to leave this to his intelligent inspection, and to his judgment. Therefore the safety-valve was infixed in the body itself; and, as it were, the alarm-bell rings when the body needs either food or liquid. Hunger is the sign that the material body is wasted, and that more is wanted to build it again. Thirst is the sign that the fluids of the body are drained away, and that more are needed to take their place. Although hunger, under certain circumstances, may become a pain, rising in intensity to a certain extent, according to the urgency of the demand, or acting unhealthily in the abnormal conditions of the body, yet, in its normal state it is not disagreeable. It is a kind of semi-pleasant experience. It begins in a very remote suggestion. It quickens the impulses. It is only when it is denied, and denied for long periods, that it becomes painful. It is not itself discriminating. Hunger never says to us, "The bones need lime." It never says, "This or that organ needs building up." It is simply a sensation; and yet by experience and imagination it becomes something very different from a mere sensation. It has the power of exciting in the mind memories, pictures, ideals. One sleeps, and there is a vague, wandering feeling of hunger in the system; and from that dreams begin to rise; and they are dreams of banquets, dreams of fountains in the wilderness, dreams of luscious fruit, almost—not quite—within reach. Sometimes they are dreams of actual eating and drinking—insipid drinking and tasteless eating; for we have memory of things, but not of sensations.

That which is true of dreams, is equally true of life. The imagination, coming with this blind sensation, creates before the mind all manner of attractive pictures; so that when men hunger, it is

SUNDAY MORNING, Feb. 11, 1872. LESSON: MATT. V. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection). Nos. 162, 905, 907.

not so much hunger that they are thinking of, as it is that supply which the sense of hunger in imagination creates before the mind. In all persons, directly or remotely, it inspires life. It is true that many of us are so far lifted up, and the conditions of our life have become so complex and organized, that we never study immediately for the supply of hunger. But if you look at human life in the origin, and if you look at the progress of the human race, I think it will be seen that hunger has been among the earliest of the stimulants which have developed industry. And, although now it is low; although its position relatively is very humble as a motive force, it has acted, and it has had no unimportant sphere of action, in the life of the world.

In the savage state hunger is still, probably, the prime law of life. Indolent, torpid almost, when gorged, savages become active, for the most part, only when hunger stimulates them. The lowest condition of humanity is indicated by that state in which men act so long as hunger is on them, and cease to act or lay up provision for the time to come, the moment hunger ceases.

Now, the same law prevails in the mind. That is to say, outward activity grows from some sort of inward uneasiness or impulse. Hunger existing in the body, works outwardly, first, into that industry which supplies it, and then enlarges gradually, and inspires a more complex industry. And so almost all of life in its upper sphere proceeds from a kind of hunger which exists in the soul. Some yearning, or longing, or action, or some faculty developing itself and working to produce its appropriate gratification—this is the analogue; and the character, as formed by the faculties, answers to the industrial creations produced by sensations of hunger and thirst in the body.

The inward hunger may be a hunger for simple activity. Creatures of all kinds have a sort of muscular buoyancy or physical activity inspired by their physical systems. There would be no accumulation of property, no continuity of exertion, if there were not an appetite for property in the mind. It is hunger for possession that raises the ideals of it, and stimulates the pursuit of it. No man would shape his life assiduously to make it comely in the sight of other men, if it were not that there is a hunger of praise lying deep in him and perpetually inciting him to win praise, by putting forth exertions which shall make him seem praiseworthy to others.

The combativeness of men springs from a dispositional irritation; from a tendency to continual contest, by the outward manifestations of self-esteem or pride. It comes from an appetite which inheres in the original constitution.

The yearnings of men for society, and for all its enjoyments and developments, likewise proceed from some inward preparation for it.

This is the law, then, which we recognize familiarly in society with regard to all the lower forms of mental activity. The hunger of the body produces prosperity; and the hunger of the understanding, of the active disposition, and of the lower forms of emotion, stirs men up to create in society those conditions which shall satisfy the cravings of the inward want.

This is the law of moral and spiritual life, just as much as of physical and intellectual life. There is not one law for a spiritual state, and another for an emotive and social and dispositional state. The law is the same throughout. The law for moral excellence, whether generic or specific, lies at the root of all true spiritual growth.

The text, therefore, strikes at a creative and organic truth. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." In that word "righteousness" is included the heart-excellence of men. The lowest conditions of human life are those in which men live for mere physical sensations. The highest are those in which men live for moral excellence. And all the way between are gradations partaking, more or less, of one extreme or the other—gradations in which men seek to better their conditions, their circumstances, their reputations, and to a certain extent, their characters, as distinguished from their reputations.

So that men are acting in life all the way through on the degrees of a long scale; and they are acting upon the principle of an inward longing as the cause of outward endeavor, thus folding, in some partial way, the promise that they shall be satisfied.

It is, then, the ideal which determines men's real moral position. It is the ideal which is created by the co-operation of some inward organic want with the imagination. It is the ideal which springs up partly from experience, and partly from the imagination. And it is the use which men make of their ideals that will gauge and characterize their whole lives.

Let us analyze and study it rather more particularly. Men without an ideal, or without an impulse toward something higher and better than they have in the present, must be regarded as belonging to the lowest class. Aspiration, by which men tend to grow in right directions, is one of the characteristic features of real, vital, true manhood.

There are a great many in the human family who are by birth so weak, so feeble, so ill-endowed, that they seem to be almost pulseless in the matter of aspiration. Creepers they are. Having

no power to fly, they creep; and they creep without the thought of wings, apparently. There seems to be a great under-class who are to be borne with, to be pitied, and sometimes to be blamed, though not in any such measure as that in which we blame ordinary faults. They provoke us too frequently, because we do not take into consideration the inherent weakness of their whole nature.

But there are those who are living in a state in which they have no tendency to grow or aspire, by a voluntary addiction to vulgar tastes and pleasures. They think either along the level of their original position, or upon a declining plane. There seems to be aroused in them as yet no ideal of anything that is better than that which the senses can bring to them, or can enjoy when it is brought. These are bad men. Not that there may not be in them transient gleams of things good; but the average tendency of such men is animal. They infest society. They are constantly liable to be made enemies of society. Their whole status will be determined, not so much by their own inward voluntary condition as by outward circumstances. They may be merely complying with what they think to be necessary to their welfare. They may be kept, by the fear of the law, by the surrounding public sentiment, and by various other influences, within bounds, so that they do not break over into vices and crimes. They are, however, the stuff out of which criminals and vicious men are made. They have tendencies which have caused many strong men to break down, and go into places where wickedness resorts, and crime is esteemed.

One can hardly think of such men and not be discouraged, unless he thinks of God, too. One hardly knows what to do with this great under-class—especially when he takes statistics, and runs out along the line of life into other nations and other times, and sees how large a section of the human family have lived very near to this condition; and how great a number of them came into it by the force of organic, hereditary influences; and came into it, also, under circumstances which afforded them very little external help. To be sure, there is a glimmer of light thrown on such men, where the apostle says, that those who are under the law shall be judged by it, and that those who are without the law, or outside of any illumination, shall be judged without the law, having the law written in their hearts; that is, all men shall be judged according to what they have, and not according to what they have not; and the judgment shall be very lenient upon infelicitous dispositions, and dispositions left with so little culture. But even the lowest form of judgment, under such circumstances, becomes op-

pressive to the imagination and to the thought. Where shall it stop? Where shall it be executed? What is the character of that realm which has such a criminal population in excess, and with so little institutional or other force to redeem it? What shall we do with the truths that glitter on the very top of the Gospel—the truth of the Fatherhood of God? What shall we do with the thought of God in the Gospel, which is interpreted to us by that very experience to which the whole soul of man is brought? Taking those inspirations that we derive from the revelations which are made to us in Scripture, and then taking our experiences, what shall we infer? I do not undertake to say what the inferences shall be. I say simply this—that there is a reason for sadness and for profound melancholy in the contemplation of the facts of human life, which exists nowhere else.

But where men are born with potency; where they are not dragged down by the deficiencies of their nature; where they go voluntarily into that state in which hunger and thirst are physical, and in which their soul has no hunger nor thirst—under such circumstances we find less difficulty in fashioning judgments.

Above this lower form of human life, in which men's ideals are mostly physical, we come to the development of society-life, where men's ideas are largely those of business; where they are much higher and more wholesome; and where, if they be conjoined to certain others, they incline to the production of virtuous states. I suppose that if we were to examine the lives of great multitudes who are well-to-do and respectable, it would be found that their more active ideas were centered on objects outside of themselves. They go out into life to build up their households. Of the good and deserving who are seeking property, very few are seeking to build up themselves interorily, except so far as they do it in building up their complex selves—their wives and children and friends, and others who are around about them. They are striving to amass a fortune for other than selfish reasons. Their business zeal has a higher element in it than the simple desire of acquisition. It has the touch of social virtue in it.

But still, a man who lives to better his condition, to better his property, to build his house better, to furnish it better, to surround himself with material for refined enjoyment, and to plant himself in the midst of social influences that shall minister to present happiness—although such a man is not ignoble, his nobleness is not of the highest type. It is of the earth, and earthy.

Higher than this are the social ideals. If you examine them for a moment, you shall find, first, the romantic. If you regard the ro-

mantic as that which is unreal and impossible, your view is censurable, or may be criticised. For there is a sense in which *romance* signifies a nobler conception; and that is to be encouraged. It is a generous symptom where the young propose to themselves a way of life which is transcendently higher than that which prevails around about them. A young man who comes into life without any thought of a nobler life than is required by the average virtue around him, can scarcely flatter himself that he has a trait of nobility in him. It is a wrong thing to dash the hopes of the young, and say to them, "It is all romance. When you have gone as far in life as I have, you will lay aside all these visions, and confine yourself to matters of fact. The world is showing itself to you in delusive colors." They will find that out fast enough. Ill-omened prophet, leave them to discover that their ideals are unfounded if they must. Their struggle will be to reduce their ideals of manhood to practical results. Do nothing to lead them to lay aside a truly heroic conception of life. Woe be to that man who has laid aside his ideals. Woe be to that man who has quenched the light which was shining afar to beckon and cheer him on, toward which he was directing his steps, and for the sake of attaining which he was making the vulgar and the common serve nobler uses!

There are also the sentimental ideals of social life, or those in which the affections are accustomed to draw the picture. These, too, are very ennobling, if one has faith in his ideals. Before the battle we all think, "How brave we shall be!" Many a young soldier, on all the march, has been stimulating himself with the thought of his heroism; but when the conflict rages, his courage falters. It is when men are under fire that they slink down and begin to feel the vulgarity of their nature overcoming their heroism. So long as life is all smooth with men, it is not difficult for them to maintain their sentimental thought and spiritual inspirations. It is only when they have to contend with facts; when they have to deal with things that are disagreeable; when they have to bear things which lead to suffering—it is only then that they find it hard to keep up their heroism. It is when sentiment becomes a thing which must be cultivated by moral endeavor, that men fail. The experience of many persons who in girlhood and boyhood are full of the choicest aspirations, hungering and thirsting after higher things, is, alas! in later life, like a house the morning after an illumination and a feast. Every pane of glass had its candle; but long before midnight every candle has burned into its socket, and run down into darkness; and in the morning there is but the unburned tallow and the remnant of wick. Thousands there be who

look out triumphing over the glory of their home; thinking what a life shall be kindled up by the heavenly luster of their affection; but when they tread the way of life, and selfishness, and envy, and jealousy, and disappointment, and poverty, and afflictive sorrow, blight their affection, and they feel the yoke and the burden, and cry out day and night, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" then how they change their social ideals!

Ah! the histories which are written are all artificial histories. Those histories which weigh with God are down so deep in the secret recesses of souls that no writing can bring them up. And I may say that the heroisms of life for the most part never flash out.

The ideals of spiritual excellence, as I have said, develop according to the same line. But they are latest. They have, apparently, less force in this world. They are most dependent upon influences. They seem to be from above. As one's outward life follows certain tendencies which, combining with imagination, produce ideals; so one is to have his moral and religious life following certain ideals, which have sprung from certain inward hungerings and thirstings of the soul. There is to be a longing for purity in the inward man; a longing for truth, ardent and unquenched; a longing for all that is godlike; for perfect manhood; for that vigor and valor which work with the gentleness, the sweetness, the meekness and the humility which inhere in true love; for wealth of character; for all that goes to make the angelic conceptions of men; a longing for symmetry and harmony and intensity and continuity in the inward life; above all, the outreaching of the soul, along the line of its ideals, for what I may call the unreal or imaginary; for those after-states and after-companionships which hang hovering over life to many of us. As to summer the clouds that are in the heaven shape themselves into cities, into castles, with battlements and gorgeous thrones, and yet are but clouds; so over the imagination hang these pictures of the glory, and grandeur, and purity, and joy of the other state; and the heart hungers and thirsts for them. And the declaration is, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." They will not be entirely satisfied. Our hunger does not die because we ate this morning. It comes again this noon. And the supply of yesterday is not the supply of to-day. And in regard to spiritual elements the general law is that those who hunger and thirst for things pure and noble, and put forth the same exertion to obtain them which we do to obtain temporal things, shall day by day find a supply. "They shall be filled." Not, however, so that they shall be conscious of

carrying about with them an experience like a diamond, never-changing. The soul will still go on yearning to be supplied. It will still hunger to be fed. It will still go on through periods of oscillation, with variations of experience. But the general fact will remain, that those who have such sensibility in their moral nature that they hunger for things higher than social life, higher than civil life, higher than physical attainments, who hunger for moral excellence—for God and for the heavenly land—have worked out in them by that very hunger, its supply. It is an incitement to meditation, to faith, to prayer, and to noble actions out of which come both instruction and fruit. They shall be supplied even here; and more gloriously shall they be filled hereafter, when the present shall pass away, and they shall see God as he is, and shall be like him, and shall be satisfied.

In view of this exposition, I remark, first, that there are a great many who live under the influence of mixed and irregular ideals. There are a great many whose aspiration is very transient. There is just enough of it to rebuke their way of living.

Have you never traveled, of a summer's night, belated, after darkness had fallen, and the storm had made the blackness more intense? Your road is hidden from you. Every now and then there comes flaming through the air the illumination of the lightning; and for an instant you see the mountain, the hill, the valley, the road, everything; but after the flash, deeper darkness settles down upon you. By and by the flash comes again, and then again the darkness shuts you in.

The ideals of others are intermittent and partial. They are easily excited and easily guided. There are whole days in which the souls of men seem to soar above the bewilderments of life. There are even weeks of harmony in some men's experience. I know not why it is that there should go on fermentations within, and that another side of the soul should seem to come into ascendency. We know how it is with morbid appetites for intoxicating drinks. I have seen men who have lived for weeks, and even for months, without these stimulants, but who, by and by, they knew not whence nor why nor how, came into a state in which they could not resist the impulse to indulge in them again. Their nervous organism seemed to run in periods; and the time would come around when their power of abstinence would give way—as when the clock has brought the pointer round you hear the click, and the machinery lets go the ratchet. There is a distemperature going on in the soul, such that, if it cannot be overruled and governed, the good resolutions that have been formed, and the oppo-

sition that has been set up will be swept away as by a flood. And that which we discern in this form of disease, is discernible to a certain extent through the action of the whole system in life. We run through periods. If we have gone for weeks and weeks in spiritual directions, it would seem almost as though backsliding was necessary. As the activity of the whole day culminates in sleep, and out of night we gather strength again; so it would seem as though our spiritual nature slept at times that it might gather strength. Because to-day we were lifted up on the wings of angels, as it were, we seek the same condition to-morrow; but we find it not. To-day our whole way of life seems fair and easy; and on either side of our path are fragrant blossoms and luscious fruit; and yet, before the week rolls round we are shut up, and harassed by a blind dread, and discontented. To-day there is a wondrous overflow of sympathetic love in our feelings, and all mankind are dear to us, and we are inspired to pray for men, and to live for them, and our Christian life seems a glorious reality, and we wonder that men should ever doubt religion, or think that there is nothing in it; and yet there comes upon this experience a distemperature which eclipses the fair orb that shone so brightly; and we find that we are nuzzling with the vulgar doubters and unbelievers, and are scarcely able to cry, and much less able to instruct. Where is our hope? Where is our faith? How helpless are we!

This intermittency is more clearly distinguishable in intensely organized natures; but it prevails more or less in all. There are very few who can carry their ideals all the time. Our ideals are sometimes like a candle. While we leave it in the house, it burns with a straight wick and flame; but the moment that we attempt to carry it out of doors, the wind blows the wick and the flame about, and the candle becomes almost useless; we are obliged to hide it in a lantern if we would derive any benefit from it in the open air.

How few men who have a noble ideal of interest in their fellow men that are struggling around about, and of sympathy for them, can go through a single day and keep that ideal! We take our ideal out with us in the morning as soldiers when they are going into battle take their resplendent uniforms; and at night it is like those same uniforms when the soldiers have come back from the battle, rolled in the mud and grimed, or burnt with powder. How far we are from the realization of our ideals of purity and goodness, although we constantly have the stimulations of truth in the church, and among Christians, and are lifted up to a higher level! What noble influences and inspirations surround our path from

day to day; and yet what a crooked course is that which we take! And how apt we are to become discouraged, and to say, "Why, these are all imaginations. There is nothing for us to do but to be about as honest as we can, and behave about as well as we can. God is too good to punish us very severely for those infirmities which the flesh is heir to!" That is not the question. The question is one which comes nearer to our own manhood than that. Can you afford to destroy your manhood by lowering your ideals? Let God be true, though every man be a liar. It is better for you to condemn yourself through and through, and stick to your ideal, than to lower your ideal to gain some quiet and self-complacency. It is not pleasant for a man to be filled with the throbs of self-reproach, to feel the measurement of the golden reed of God's sanctuary; it is not pleasant for a man to see how poor his life is here when laid on the back-ground of the other life as the imagination presents it to us; nevertheless, it is better that we should attempt to lift up our ideals, and make them more stringent than they can be if we seek relief by humbling and vulgarizing them. He who, though thorns are bound upon his brow, though his hands be pierced with nails, though he be slain, still maintains his ardent faith in things the noblest, and the best, and the highest, and the purest, and the truest, and does it in spite of himself, and though it keeps him in a purgatory of self-condemnation, is a real man; and he who brings himself out of purgatory, and into a condition of self-complacency, and contentment with himself, because he requires so little of himself, is a vulgarized man.

Human life, I think, has as many discontents and frets from an unwise use of subtle ideas as from any quarter. In this land, where we have such abundance around us, where opportunities open to every one, and where social life is keyed so high, we are not, I think, in the main a happy people. I do not know that the household is as happy as it was some hundred years ago, when men lived nearer the lock and the flint than they do now. I see on every side men who are rendering themselves discontented with what they have, by a kind of subtle, undertone ideal of what they wish they had. If one has enough of raiment for the purposes of the body, he is not thankful, because he has a vision of superfine raiment, not as something for which he will patiently wait or work, but as something which others have and he has not. And so he grumbles. If the table is spread frugally, but with sufficient plain food for the body's wants, it is not a grateful meal that he makes; for he imagines a more bounteous table, such as others have, but he has not. And so he grumbles again. Men and women are thinking, in the

household, every day, and every hour of the day, not so much of what they have, as of what they have not. They are sitting in judgment on their mercies by the thought of other better things which they might have had; and, instead of using this ideal conception of better things as a spur to urge them on to higher industry and attainment, they use it as a whip of scorpions to minister discontent to themselves all the time, by comparing somebody else's life with the life which they are actually passing. And so they have what is called a fictitious experience.

There are not so many joys in the world that we need turn our joys to sorrow. We need not turn our sweet to bitter. We need not live on so low a plane, and measure our life by such a low standard, as to waste our happiness by a crumbling discontent. We need not be made miserable by holding up before ourselves the vision of a better future. If we believe in such a future, let us by patience wait for it until it is developed in us. Meantime, let every man be content, every hour, and be thankful for the mercies of that hour, whatever his circumstances may be.

We must, in order to make this ideal other than a scourge and torment, join to it more than human strength. To those secret ideals which range over the outward life, and the inward life, and the life which is to come, there must be joined, it seems to me, a childlike faith in Christ, and a child-like faith in the great compensations of the future, or else we shall have, not happiness, but pining, discontent, self-condemnation and fear. We are never to be made happy by the reality of what we are. I lay it down as a universal canon, that no form of true, rich, noble, spiritual enjoyment can ever be founded on the consciousness of contentment. "By the grace of God we are what we are." We are beggars, and are clothed by him. We are blind, and we see only through his vision. We are what we are by the sustaining, restraining and inspiring power of him who loved us. We are, however, after all, absolutely considered, most imperfect, rude, in the best things. As judged by the eye of God we are full of gaps. There are long rests where there should be only breaks. We are full of concussions and causes of misery. And our joy is to spring largely from the thought that we are beloved by God, that he is preparing us for the beauty of the perfected state, that he is waiting patiently for us as we are for our children. It is not the perfection of our children that leads us to love them. It is the necessity of our nature to love them. And for twice a score of years we wait for them to come up to their full beauty and strength. God waits for us. He loves us. And his love for us is not on account of what we are, but on account of what he

is himself. It is the necessity of God to love. He would not be God if he did not love. He waits for us, and it is in the consciousness of this fact that we are to find our rest and satisfaction.

Do you not suppose that your best friend knows what your weaknesses are? And do you not suppose that he is delighted to see you filling your hours with music, and glad of all that which tends to make you strong and wise? Do you suppose that friendship is blind? No eye sees so keenly. The acutest ear is that of the best musician. Nowhere is discord so jarring as to the soul that has the most relish for concords. Parents see their children's faults, and cover them down. And does not friendship wait upon friendship? Do we not lift each other up, and carry each other forward toward the ideals which beckon us on? And do we not rejoice in the present indications of that which is to be?

Man in this world is only something like a chart—not the thing itself. He is but a kind of map—not the country, the hills, the valleys, and the water. He is merely a symbol of those things. We are a hint of what we are to be. And we love each other continually, notwithstanding our imperfections and undeveloped condition. That is not friendship which has this world for a background. That only is friendship which has immortality behind it. We love and joy in those to whom we are true friends. And does not God do the same thing? Do we not do it because we are taught of God? And is not this about the secret of that rest which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ?

We are pictures unpainted. We are statues unshaped. God is working out in us his own ideal. He is forming us according to his own good pleasure. And it is in the consciousness of the love of God; it is in our faith in the Divine purity; it is in our belief in the reality of the divine inspiration, that we find peace. We cannot find peace in ourselves. We need to live under the influence of the other life. We must live by our higher conceptions, or by our imagination quickened by an inward hunger. We must ever more keep before us the fruitions of the radiant future. We must take refuge in the lesson of the Saviour. It is the grace of God which saves us—that grace which has its root and center in love. In the consciousness of God's love our imperfections are swallowed up and lost.

I care not for the rude leaves which break the ground in early spring, and which have very little form, and no comeliness; for every one of these basilar, seminal leaves is a prophecy of that which is to come forth when the warm summer has nourished the plant and taught it how to blossom, or how to bring forth fruit. The

crude and imperfect blossoms and fruit which we see here are but hints of what they shall be by and by under a diviner sky and in a diviner presence.

We must have faith in the thought of God, and the love of God, and rest in these; and though every day we are conscious of being far from the perfection which God requires, and which our own ideals require, and though we are filled with self-reproaches and self-condemnations; yet supereminent above all other feelings should be the sense that we are children of God, and that we are rising toward the joy of perfected manhood and of spirituality in the heavenly land.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We rejoice, our Father, that thy providence is above us all. In this great world we wander not forlorn, because thou hast cared for us, and dost multiply the comforts of life from day to day on every side. And yet, with outward bread we are not satisfied. Nor is it enough that our bodies are clothed. It is not enough that we dwell together in an earthly friendship and peace. There lies beyond an unapproached shore. Though there be signals from thence, we know not what they mean and can discern but imperfectly. We see as through a glass darkly. We believe that thou art there, and that there are gathered together the pure and the just, and that in a nobler commonwealth life goes on without the disfigurements of this experiment. With outspread wings we forever fly, joyfully, in that land, who are here but callow and unable to go. We believe that there thou art thyself the teacher, and that we shall be in such conditions that we can approach unto thee, and no longer discern thee through symbols and imaginations—no longer see thee under human forms and imitations. We shall see thee as thou art. We shall be like thee. We shall be satisfied.

How imperfect is the way that leads to thee! The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the love of God is the end of wisdom. And yet how shall we minister them; how they shall lead us; how, in all the infinite applications of daily life we shall hold ourselves in a true fear and in a true love—this has been our trouble, our anxiety, and our failure.

We need thee to show us what we are, and to give us some thought of that shape which we ought to wear, and of how we may rise by our inward nature, and prepare it for the heriage of the the blest. We groped, often, at mid-day. We have sought thee, and no voice has answered to our outcry. Yet, we believe that we are living and moving under the cope of thy kind thought and thy providence, and that all things are working together for good to them that love thee.

Grant that we may have this charter and title, that we love God. May we know it by the love which is reflected from us upon each other. May we know it by the whole disposition of our souls. And in the certitude of thy divine love, may we rise, at last, believing that what is unknown now

shall be revealed; that what is unreached shall be attained; and that what is yet undeveloped and crude shall ripen into blessed fruitions of the heavenly land.

Draw near, this morning, to all that are waiting before thee, and help them according to their several needs. Grant that those who are troubled in heart, and mind, and state, may find consolation, this morning, in waiting before God. May they be able to cast their care upon thee. Why should we bear our burdens when there is infinite strength to bear them for us? Why should we in anxiety wait, and look, and long, when thy wisdom has run before ours, and appointed our paths, and is guiding us in them? May we know how to trust in God—yet not with such a trust as shall lead us to sluggishness. May we rejoice, rather, to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, since it is God working in us to will and to do his good pleasure.

Grant, we pray thee, that those in thy presence, this morning, who have come up hither from places of sorrow, and who wear the garments of mourning, may find that they have come indeed to the friendship of the living God—the Comforter; and may they find the distemperature of their grief healed. May they know how to behold thee in thine afflictive providence as still full of encouragement and of love, and of the tenderest sympathy, for them. We pray that thou wilt grant to those who have been bereaved, and who look back upon the sorrow, and upon the brightness of the past, through the dimness and gloom of present suffering, the light of thy countenance and the joy of thy spirit.

Grant, we pray thee, that to those who are burdened with cares, and who have difficulties in life, and who find every day and every hour, as it were hewn among stones, hard, ascending lines—grant to them that as their day is they may have strength also. May they feel themselves refreshed every day by thee. May they have that bread which cometh down from heaven and whose strength is indeed immortal.

We pray for those who bear the care of others upon their hearts. We pray for parents in behalf of their children, and for friends in behalf of their friends.

Grant, we pray thee, that this divine solicitude one for another, not only may nourish, but may minister gladness. May it be filled with hope and with cheer. May there be wisdom granted to all those who stand for others to do the things that are best.

We pray for thy blessing to rest upon those who are advancing into life, and who have an inexperienced way before them. May the young grow up in truth and honor, and have stability therein. May they have that knowledge from thee which shall guide them unerringly.

We pray, O God, that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon those who stand in the midst of life, and are trying to carry out the truth as it is, in human affairs. May they have wisdom given them by which they shall be able to bear into the midst of human life healing influences. May themselves not be beaten down and made decrepit by the assaults that are heaped upon their faith. May they by their faith be able to carry men with more hope and light through difficult ways.

We pray for those who are teaching in our Sabbath-schools and our Bible-classes. We pray that they themselves may be taught of God, and filled with the divine Spirit. May their hearts be evermore warmed, as by the summer, with sympathy for their fellow men; and may they go forth to labor with meekness, and patience, and fidelity.

We pray that thou wilt bless this church in all its interests. May its members, whether gathered together here or scattered abroad, still be under thy paternal care; and may they join in sympathy with us to-day who are

far from us bodily. And as they think of the songs of Zion, as they remember praises and prayers and joys here, may they partake again, somewhat, in their solitude, of these various divine refuges of the heart.

We pray, O God, that thou wilt bless our whole land. Be pleased to remember the President of these United States, and those who are associated with him in authority. Grant that they may be indued with wisdom, and that they may be able to lead this nation, being themselves led by the hand of God.

We pray for the governments and the legislatures of the States, and for those who execute laws, and for all the institutions of learning, and for all those who are teaching in them, and in schools everywhere, and for the whole people, that they may grow in knowledge and in grace, and that this nation may be redeemed from evil, and purified, and become a nation zealous of good works.

Bless all the nations of the earth. Unite them more and more by sympathy. May repulsions and animosities and hatreds die away. May the day of darkness pass quickly. Bring in that light which is to be the cheer and the salvation of the whole world. Let him that is the Light shine forth. May all the nations flock to the banner of Jesus Christ, and may no other banner be lifted up; and may no other weapons but those which are welded by the hand of love, be cast. May wars cease, with all their desolations and evil works; and may the whole world be filled with thy glory.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant unto us more clearly to see the way from ourselves unto thee; more clearly to see the relations between thy great soul and ours; more perfectly to believe in that stream of divine beneficence which is the source of our life, and which causes our life from day to day to break out into things right and good. Grant that we may not shut our eyes to right and duty. Grant that we may not, in our discouragement in attempting to realize our ideas, throw thine away. May we, rather, be willing to pass every day under the sharp condemnation of our consciences, and begin again. May we never forsake the path of rectitude because it is steep and narrow. We pray that thou wilt deliver us from unbelief, and from all sin, and bring us, at last, through the unspeakable love of him who gave himself for us, into thine own immediate presence, where forever we shall be schooled by thee, and forever shall rejoice in thee. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

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